

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5483

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 1556

BUJUMBURA FOR GRIBBIN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, XA, RW

SUBJECT: PESIDENT QUERIES ME ABOUT MILITARY ASSISTANCE, NYT ARTICLE

REF STATE 269250

1. SUMMARY: PROMPTED BY RECENT NYT ARTICLE, PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA CALLED ME IN TO ASK ABOUT STATE OF PLAY ON HIS MILITARY AID REQUEST. I PASSED ON TO HIM VERY DISCOURAGING NEWS OUT OF WASHINGTON (CONFIRMED BY VISITING DESK OFFICER GRIBBIN), CAUSING HIM TO REFLECT THAT GOR IS CAUGHT IN "VICIOUS CIRCLE" -- IT DEPENDS ON MILITARY AS A KEY INSTITUTION, BUT IT CAN GET NEITHER SECURITY HELP NOR DEVELOPMENT AID TO ENCOURAGE ARMY IN CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTION. I RECOMMEND HE NOT BE KEP DANGLING IF WASHINGTON'S MIND IS MADE UP. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE AT 7:30 THIS MORNING TO ASK ME " INFORMALLY" ABOUT THE STATUS OF HIS REQUEST FOR NON-LETHAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE REMARKED HE HAD RECENTLY READ OCTOBER 28 NYT ARTICLE WHICH DESCRIBED
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THE BATTLE GOING ON WITHIN STATE OVER THE RWANDAN REQUEST AND SIMILAR APPEALS FROM UPPER VOLTA AND MALI.

3. HABYARIMANA SAID HE WAS CONCERNED IN PARTICULAR BY THREE POINTS RAISED IN THE ARTICLE: (A) THAT PROPONENTS OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE WERE ASKING ONLY US \$300,000 ("A PITTANCE"), TO BE DIVIDED AMONG THREE

COUNTRIES; (B) THAT RWANDA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD WAS A BONE OF CONTENTION; AND (C) THAT RWANDA WAS FAULTED ON ACCOUNT OF HAVING A MILITARY GOVERNMENT (WHEREAS MALI WAS NOT). THE PRESIDENT ASKED WHETHER I HAD ANY INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT SHED LIGHT ON THE NYT ARTICLE OR ON HOW RWANDA'S REQUEST WAS OTHERWISE FARING IN WASHINGTON.

4. RESPONDING, I FIRST ASSURED THE PRESIDENT THAT THE DEPT HAD ISSUED A STATEMENT TAKING ISSUE WITH CRITICISM OF RWANDA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. I ADDED I THOUGHT AMBASSADOR UBALIJORO HAD ALSO RESPONDED EFFECTIVELY TO THIS POINT IN A LETTER TO THE NYT EDITOR. HABYARIMANA WONDERED, THOUGH, WHETHER PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON CONFUSED RWANDA WITH UGANDA AND HIM WITH IDI AMIN, AND HE URGED THAT I ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISTS TO VISIT THIS COUNTRY AND HELP CORRECT FALSE IMPRESSIONS IN THE US (SEE SEPTEL).

5. CONTINUING, I TOLD HABYARIMANA FRANKLY THAT DESK OFFICER GRIBBIN HAD NOT YET BROUGHT GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE OUTLOOK FOR RWANDA'S REQUEST AS DUST FROM THE "BATTLE" BEGINS TO SETTLE IN WASHINGTON. ALTHOUGH IT HAD RECEIVED MOST SERIOUS AND EXHAUSTIVE EXAMINATION, REQUEST HAD RUN UP AGAINST UNSURMOUNTABLE LEGAL AND POLITICAL OBSTACLES: USG DESIRE TO REDUCE MILITARY AID COMMITMENTS ABROAD AND AVOID ANY NEW UNDERTAKINGS; AND STRONG PREFERENCE FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANNELING DEVELOPMENT AID VIA CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS, RATHER THAN STRENGTHEN MILITARY IN THIS DOMAIN. CONSEQUENTLY, I SAID, RWANDA'S REQUEST HAD BEEN PUT NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE PRIORITY LIST AS FINALLY DRAWN UP BY DEPARTMENT.

6. HABYARIMANA REPLIED THIS CAUGHT RWANDA IN A VICIOUS CIRCLE. ON THE ONE HAND, IT COULD NOT RECEIVE WEAPONS AND MATERIAL TO SUPPORT ARMY'S SECURITY FUNCTION BECAUSE IT WAS NOT STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED STATES; AND ON THE OTHER HAND, IT COULD NOT HELP TO STRENGTHEN ITS NATION-BUILDING FUNCTION BECAUSE OF OUR IDEOLOGICAL AVERSION TO MILITARY RULE. GRANTED, RWANDAN GOVERNMENT INCLUDES MILITARY OFFICERS (INCLUDING HIMSELF) WHO WERE NOT ELECTED TO THEIR POSITIONS, BUT ITS GOVERNMENT IS BY NO MEANS "MILITARIST," AND UNDER HIS DIRECTION ARMY SEEKS TO MAKE LEADING CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. MORE THAN THAT, HE SAID, "ARMY IS A DYNAMIC POLITICAL REALITY WHICH EXISTS AND MUST BE ENCOURAGED IN CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTIONS" -- IF IT IS TO BE RESTRAINED (HE IMPLIED) FROM CHARGING OFF IN NON-CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTIONS. WAS THERE NO WAY THAT RWANDAN COULD OBTAIN

SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT FROM ITS WESTERN FRIENDS?

7. I DID NOT OFFER THE PRESIDENT ANY NEW HOPE.

8. COMMENT: HAYBARIMANA IMPLIED AT OUTSET THAT HIS "INFORMAL" COMMENTS WERE PRELIMINARY TO A MORE FORMAL MESSAGE HE HAD IN MIND SENDING WASHINGTON ON THIS SUBJECT. I HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER OUR SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION, IN WHICH I HEAVILY STRESSED THE GLOOMY OUTLOOK FOR HIS REQUEST, WILL ALTER HIS INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD. CERTAINLY HE WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN THAT WASHINGTON WAS NOT SO FAR PERSUADED BY HIS "NATION-BUILDING" ARGUMENT.

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9. SEPTTEL WILL DESCRIBE HOW OUR CONVERSATION ON MILITARY AID MODULATED INTO DISCUSSION OF OUR "STANATING" (TO QUOTE HAYBARIMANA) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HERE. PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR HE FELT HE WAS BEING GIVEN RUN AROUND BY ARGUMENT THAT WE PREFER TO SEE AID CHanneled THROUGH CIVILIAN, RATHER THAN MILITARY, INSTITUTIONS, INASMUCH AS HE HAS HAD NOT MUCH MORE LUCK WITH THE FORMER THAN WITH THE LATTER.

10. ACTION REQUESTED: NOW THAT I HAVE GIVEN HAYBARIMANA MY GLOOMY REPORT ON STATE OF PLAY REGARDING HIS MILITARY AID REQUEST, BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT KEEP HIM DANGLING. AS SOON AS APPROPRIATE, RECOMMEND THAT I BE SENT A DEFINITIVE MESSAGE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH EMBASSY CAN FORMALLY RESPOND TO ORIGINAL GOR REQUEST. CRIGLER

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